

# Police Chief Bennett to Retire

Your Complete Community Newspaper  
Every Sunday and Thursday

## Torrance Herald

A New Canal  
Through Cuba?  
(Hoppe, Page 4)

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# DRIVER DIES IN FIERY CRASH

## Auto Slams Into Pole, Traps Victim

A young floor-covering salesman driving toward his home in the pre-dawn hours yesterday was killed in the wreckage of his light sedan as it slammed through a power pole on Hawthorne Avenue, ignited, and created a towering funeral pyre.

Thorvald Dick Simons, 23, was dead at the scene, burned badly as he was trapped in the wreckage of the burning auto.

Accident Investigation Division officers Robert Armstrong and James Weyant estimated Simons had been traveling southbound on Hawthorne Avenue at about 50 miles an hour. The right rear tire was blown out and may have triggered the crash, Armstrong said a few hours after the 4:45 a.m. crash. The driver may have fallen asleep, however, he added. Efforts to determine the cause of the crash are continuing.

## Okay Given For Storm Drain Unit

Final plans and specifications for the second unit of the South Torrance storm drain have been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The line will serve the Carson and Lomita areas.

Bids for the project, estimated to cost about \$950,000 will be opened March 6.

The project will involve the construction of nearly three miles of reinforced concrete box and pipe drain conduit and include two separate lines.

Funds to finance the work on the project come from the \$225 million bond issue approved by voters in 1958. Construction will begin within three weeks after the award of the contract. Actual construction time is estimated at 10 months.

## Senator From Nebraska Will Speak Feb. 22

Senator Roman A. Hruska (R-Neb.) will be guest speaker at the annual Lincoln Day dinner sponsored by the 17th Congressional District Republican Central Committee, according to John McDonald Wren, chairman. The dinner will be at the Hacienda Hotel, San Pedro, Feb. 22, at 7:30 p.m.

The senator, a practicing lawyer in Omaha, Neb., until election to congress in 1952, heartily endorses the candidacy of Senator Barry Goldwater for the presidency of the United States.

Tickets are \$7.50 per person and are available at Republican headquarters, 2271 Torrance Blvd., FA 8-1776. Proceeds of the event will be used to finance the local Republican committee in the forthcoming 1963 election campaign.

## Student Council Places Wreath At White Statue

Members of the student council at Stephen M. White Junior High School recently placed a wreath at the foot of a statue of Stephen M. White. Each year the students honor the man for whom the school was named by placing a wreath at the statue.

Following the wreath ceremony at the Hall of Administration, the students were conducted on a tour of the facility arranged by Supervisor Kenneth Hahn and Gordon Nesvig, clerk of the board of supervisors.



MOTORIST DIES . . . Fireman watches smoldering ruins of a light sedan which carried Thorvald Dick Simons, 23, of Torrance to his death early Saturday. Investigating officers said the car slammed into a power pole on Hawthorne Avenue south of Torrance Boulevard, sheared off the pole and erupted in flames. The driver was pinned in the flaming wreckage. (Herald Photo)

## Nearing 30-Year Tenure

Percy G. Bennett, a 30-year veteran officer who has served Torrance as its Police Chief since 1957, Friday announced his intention to retire from his post effective July 1, 1964.

In a letter dated Thursday, Bennett told Ed Ferraro, acting city manager, he would complete 30 years of service to the Torrance Police Department on July 1.

"Another factor influencing my decision to announce my



PERCY G. BENNETT Announces Retirement

retirement is the advice of my physician, who has treated me during my ill health for the past two years," he wrote.

BENNETT, a native of London, came to the United States as a boy and has made his home in the Waleria area of Torrance for nearly 40 years. He built the fire station at Waleria and became its first fire chief when that area was annexed to the city. He also served as chief of police for that area, holding both jobs at once.

After consolidation of the police department, Bennett covered all beats, including a tour as motorcycle officer. He became captain of the pistol team which won nationwide honors prior to World War II.

"I have sincerely enjoyed serving the people of the City of Torrance during my period of public service," Bennett wrote in his notice of retirement. "I wish to take this opportunity to thank the hundreds of persons with whom I have worked and been associated over the years."

FERRARO SAID the notice of his retirement had been accepted.

Bennett and his wife, Addie, live at 24651 Hawthorne Ave. They have two sons, Melvin, a Torrance police sergeant, and Warren, a Los Angeles County employe.

Bennett was called downtown in November to testify in the early stages of the attorney general's probe into city irregularities, and has been away from his office much of the time since. He was hospitalized, missing one of the appearance dates downtown last November, and was served with a new subpoena in the hospital.

HE WAS subsequently described as "very cooperative" by Jack Goertzen, deputy attorney general who has been heading up the investigation. Goertzen's remarks followed

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## Goertzen Ready to Wrap Up Police Department Inquiry

Investigations into alleged irregularities in the city, touched off last summer after three police officers were arrested in a two-week period of felony charges, may be nearing a major plateau, according to Jack Goertzen, deputy attorney general who has been heading the probe.

Commenting Friday on the status of the continuing probe, Goertzen told The HERALD that he thought a report winding up the matter "as far as the Torrance police department

is concerned," could be ready in a matter of 10 days or two weeks.

"I would hope to have the final report on this matter in the hands of the City Council in two weeks," he said.

PLANS TO have another report ready this weekend, reported to councilmen by City Attorney Stanley Remelmeier, have been dropped, Goertzen said. He said the report was to have been a supplemental report concerning Wade Peebles.

The resignation of Peebles removed the immediate need for the report, it was indicated.

Whether other phases of the city's operation will be the subject of additional investigation has not been made clear. It is known that persons whose duties are far removed from day-to-day police routine have been questioned by the investigators.

These have included such city employes as the city engineer, building officials, and others.

The HERALD also has been told that persons in some construction industries have met with the state and county investigators.

Nature of these inquiries has not been revealed.

## Continues Monday

## Judge Denies Mistrial Motions in Isen Case

Two motions for mistrial filed on behalf of Mayor Albert Isen, now being tried for drunk driving in Compton Municipal Court, have been denied by Judge John C. Landis.

In the first motion, Isen's attorney contended that a ruling from the bench that the exact time a witness reached a conclusion about the state of drunkenness of a subject was immaterial was in error. Judge Landis sustained his denial Thursday and told jurors that

the general time might be considered material, but that the "exact time" was not.

FRIDAY, THE attorney entered a new motion for mistrial contending that witnesses unfriendly to Mayor Isen were seen talking with members of the jury. The judge also denied that motion.

Trial of Isen on charges that he was drunk when his auto slammed into the bed of a parked truck east of Torrance on Oct. 10 will continue into its fourth day Monday in Compton Municipal Court.

Mayor Isen, represented by attorney Richard E. Maher, heard a California Highway Patrolman testify Thursday that he thought the mayor was drunk the night of the accident. Officer John Eigenman demonstrated for the jury how

Isen tried to perform a series of balance tests.

A CHEMIST called in by Dep. Dist. Atty. Dick Smith, who is prosecuting the case, testified that a sample of Isen's blood indicated an alcohol content of .25 per cent. The chemist, Dan Seeli, said .15 is considered generally sufficient to produce intoxication.

Earlier several teenagers who had been riding in a car nearby testified to the actions of Isen at the scene of the crash.

Isen has contended that another car forced him into the parked truck, and questions of his attorney to witnesses on the stand have sought during the first days of the trial to establish the presence of such a vehicle. Another vehicle has been placed in the general area by some witnesses.

## Dr. Rafferty To Address Principals

Dr. Max Rafferty, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, will address the Torrance Elementary Principals Assn. at a breakfast meeting Friday morning.

Dr. Rafferty will discuss problems involving the education in the state. He will devote some time to the role of the elementary school principal, according to R. E. Wilson, publicity chairman of the group.

An informal question period will follow the address by Dr. Rafferty.

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## A Penny for your Thoughts

"Do you think the sale of weapons through the mails should be forbidden?" asked the Pennies photographer of several Torrance residents.

Barry Shivers, 23225 Park St.:

"Yes, I think it should be restricted. Just as in the case of the President's assassination, you do not know who you are selling the weapon to, his age, mental condition, for what purpose. I think it should be prohibited."



Mrs. Phillip MacBride, 4701 Bindewald:

"Yes, I do. I didn't know before the President's assassination that they could be purchased through the mails. There is no restriction as to age or who can obtain a weapon when they are obtained through the mail. That is the thing I have against mail order purchasing."

Mrs. Louis Fucci, 5427 Sharryne Lane:

"Definitely! Anybody can buy them, even teenagers. People who sell weapons should know who is buying them. I also think a permit should be required to buy a weapon, even when purchased over the counter."



Mrs. Richard Rankin, 2322 W. 177th St.:

"I think it should be regulated as much as it is over the counter. Prohibiting it—well, I don't know. I don't think it would cut down much on the number of weapons used in crimes, but it would keep kids from getting guns easily and that is the main thing."

Mrs. Ronald Hoover, 1974 W. 233rd St.:

"I don't think guns should be sold at all through the mails. There should be very strict regulations on the sale of guns and weapons of all kinds, and they can't be enforced through the mails."



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A Scout is Reverent

Today is Boy Scout Sunday and congregations throughout the area will be dotted with Boy Scouts in uniform, a highlight of Boy Scout Week. In many churches, Boys Scouts will be receiving religious awards made available to Scouts by their church organizations. The Boy Scouts of America believes that no boy can grow to a successful manhood without a firm belief in God.